A SALUTATION OF LOVE,

To those who are entred on a Spiritual Travel: with Cautions against [illegible] which may attend them in the Way.

By THOMAS GWIN.

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BRITISH
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A SALUTATION OF LOVE, &c.

Dear Friends,

AS it hath pleased the great God, in and through his Blessed Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, to call my Soul to an Inward acquaintance with himself, and to give me some part in the Gospel Ministry, wherein I may (I hope) say, I have faithfully Laboured, according to the Ability he has bestowed on me; So it is become my Concern, to Call to my Fellow-Mortals, and to Invite the Children of Men, that they may come to the Marriage Supper of the Lord: But Oh! the difficulty of this Work, how many have

turned away their Ears, and have been ready to ſay, *Speak to us of the Gains and of the Advantages of the World, or of the Honours and Pleaſures of this preſent Life; but tell us not of Enjoyments that our Eye hath not ſeen, nor our Ear heard; let thoſe look after them that liſt, we are for what we ſee the World wanders after.* To theſe our Teſtimonies have been very ineffectual, becauſe of their Unbelief; ſome have heard, and have not applied their Minds to underſtand what is ſaid unto them, but have been like the *High-way Ground*; others have been ſo employed about their *Farms*, and their *Merchandize*, that they deſire to be Excuſed. But I would have all theſe remember the Sentence of Truth, and the Judgment of God in their Caſe, *Not one of them all ſhall taſt of my Supper*: And Oh! ſaith my Soul, that thoſe would Repent and Turn to the Lord, before the Day of their Viſitation paſſes over, leſt when at laſt they Cry unto him, the door of Mercy be ſhut againſt them.

But my preſent deſign of Writing is to you my Friends, more eſpecially to ſuch, amongſt whom the Lord enabled me lately to Travel in his Service, to ſtir you up, by putting you in remembrance

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of the Viſitations of the Father's Love, which he was pleaſed to renew amongſt us; and that you may walk Daily in his Holy Awe, and in the Senſe of his Living preſence, and may never be drawn away by the Error, or by the Example of the Wicked, nor may fall from your own Stedfaſtneſs; but that through the ſtrength of his Spirit, you may hold on your way, growing ſtronger and ſtronger, and may be ſtrengthned with Might by his Grace, in your inner Man.

I hope you will lend your Ear, and patiently receive this word of Exhortation.

In the firſt place, I Charge and Counſel you, Let not the Love of this preſent World, nor a too earneſt proſecution of the things of this Life, Choak your Spirits, nor render you Unfruitful in the work of Godlineſs.

Time might fail me, to repeat to you the many Cautions, given by the Holy Prophets, and by the Apoſtles in this Caſe, and the Dangers which attend ſuch a Condition. Yet let me re-mind you a little, of what our Bleſſed Lord ſays in the Parable of the Sower, particularly, when the *Seed of the Kingdom*

fell amongſt Thorns; and this many are come to the unhappy experience of, where the Cares of this Life, and the Deceitfulneſs of wordly Enjoyments, have render'd them ſlack in the Lord's Service; and whereas they might (had they waited on him) have laid up for themſelves *Treaſures in Heaven*, and have enjoyed the ſweet ſprings of God's Love, their Hearts being overcome with the Cares and Pleaſures here below, they at laſt are grown to be at eaſe in *Sion*, unacquainted with the Exerciſes of his beloved Children, and of the way that leads to his Holy Mountain; and it's no marvel if ſuch as live in a careleſs Profeſſion, grow Luke-warm and Indifferent, and they not being uſed to the refreſhing Seaſons, and to that Arm of Divine Help, which God beſtows liberally on the Poor, and on the Needy Souls, they come in proceſs of Time, to queſtion, whether there be really any ſuch Enjoyments, as the Saints of Old, and People of God at this Day, Teſtifie of; or whether ſuch pretences are not the effect of an overheated Imagination; until at laſt they Conclude like *Eſau*, that 'tis beſt for them to hunt after thoſe things that Periſh with

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the using, and to sell their Birth-Rights for a *Mess of Pottage*; or at least say in themselves, God expects no such strictness of Life, nor a Conversation so coupled with his Fear, as we are frequently told of; God knows we stand in need of those things, and therefore allows us to follow after them. But poor Soul, thine Estate is very Miserable, if thou seest not that thou much more needest, the Light of God's Countenance, and the Joy which it gives to those who follow him; I would thou mightest perceive how the Devil deals by thee, as the *Philistines* did by *Sampson*, he puts out thine Eyes, and will not suffer thee to see, how 'tis not a real need, but an imaginary one, that puts thee on those Pursuits, and makes thee think thine endeavours are more effectual for thy support, than God's Care is for thee; and as thou follows this Spirit, thou wilt never be satisfi'd with Riches, nor ever say to thy self, that thou hast got enough.

I would not be understood, to perswade any from a needful Industry, or from a prudent Management of their Worldly Affairs; it's possible some may Err, by their negligence: But I am engaged to Warn you, against suffering your

Minds to be overcome with the Cares of this Life; knowing certainly, that if theſe Periſhing matters with-hold you from God's Service, and make you Careleſs of waiting upon, or of Worſhipping him, theſe have too much Influence upon you. If theſe engage you in violent Quarrels or in Conteſts about theſe Earthly things, if you begin to Wrong and Abuſe your Brethren, or any body elſe, theſe have withdrawn your Mind from the dictates of Truth. If theſe render you any way High-minded, or cauſes you to put your Truſt in uncertain Riches, rather than in the Living God, you are gone from the way of Truth, and have need to return again, and that ſpeedily. If theſe lead you any way into Murmuring, or Grudging againſt the Providence and Will of God, they rob your Souls of true Peace. Whereas thoſe who are laying up for themſelves Treaſures in Heaven, they are contented in God's Will, they Live in Sweetneſs and Love with their fellow Servants, and walk humbly before God, and his Statutes become their Song in the Houſe of their Pilgrimage, and they are become like unto *David*, who ſaid, *I was glad when they ſaid unto me, Let us go to the Houſe of the Lord.*

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Dear Friends, theſe things are intended as Cautions for you, that you may (as faithful Soldiers of Chriſt) not entangle your ſelves with abundance of Cares; but be diligent in ſeeking him, and calling on him, who will then bleſs your Souls with a renewed ſenſe of his Goodneſs, and will open your Ears to hearken attentively to his Voice, whether it may be deliver'd inwardly by his Spirit, or ſpoken by any Miniſter or Meſſenger which God may ſend amongſt you; and then you will behold the Deceit of your greateſt Adverſary, who would perſwade you, that there is not any Evil in letting your Affections ſo eagerly after the Earth, whilſt you do not give any cauſe of Scandal or Reproach to your Profeſſion. Truly my Friends, it's too great a Reproach thereto, if we give People cauſe to Obſerve, that our Minds are overmuch bent that way, and that we are too much in Love with thoſe objects that Periſh with the uſing, they will then conclude, whatever your Pretences may be, you are not ſo fixed on thoſe things that are Above, as we would *have* them believe.

If I ſhould again tell you, this is a great Temptation, one of the ſubtileſt

Shafts

Shafts of the Devils Bow, and the moſt likely to prevail againſt you. 'Tis an undoubted Truth, many are ſo regardful of their Reputation, as to avoid the Sins of Luſt, and Uncleanneſs; ſome, for the ſake of their Health; and others, becauſe it's a practice generally diſ-eſteem'd by the Sober, ſhun Drunkenneſs; others abhor Lying, looking on it as a Low and a Scandalous Vice: But this unaccountable Love of the World, call it Coveteouſneſs or Ambition (for they go as it were hand in hand) engage People earneſtly after Gain; not becauſe they need it, but becauſe ſome body, they obſerve, hath more than themſelves, which makes them uneaſie, it's counted more reputable, and not ſo apt to diſturb the Conſcience, or rather Lulls it a-ſleep, yet does it lead its Votaries to as Deſtructive Paths, and as far as other Vices, from the Enjoyment of the ſweetneſs of the Love of the Almighty.

Moreover, ſome in this eager purſuit and hunting after the Earth, having met with diſappointments, have miſcarried, and fallen ſhort, and whilſt a little would not ſerve them, they have been ſeeking great things, even that little hath been taken

ken from them, and they have grown Fraudulent and Deceitful, and have not paid their juſt Debts, thereby have become every way a Shame and a Reproach. But I ſhall cloſe this particular with that pertinent Advice of *Paul* to *Timothy*, *Epiſt.* 1. *Ch.* 4. *v.* 6. &c. *But Godlineſs with Contentment is great Gain; for we brought nothing into this World, and it's certain, we can carry nothing out: having Food and Raiment let us therewith be Content; for thoſe that will be Rich, fall into a ſnare, and many fooliſh and hurtful Luſts, which drown Men in Deſtruction and Perdition. But thou O Man of God! Flee thoſe things.*

Secondly, Avoid the Vain Friendſhips, and Pernicious Fellowſhips of the World, which have a tendency to draw the Mind from God.

It's not hereby intended, that you ſhould not at all Accompany, or Converſe with Perſons of a different Perſwaſion; for then, as ſaid the Apoſtle, *you muſt of neceſſity go out of the World*; but that you may be Careful that ſuch Societies draw you not from the fear of God, as it hath been the Lot, eſpecially of ſome young Folks, who have thereby been led out of both the Form and Power of the Truth,

Truth, and have begun to diſlike the ways of Godlineſs, and thoſe Characters of Plainneſs and Sobriety wherein they have been Educated by their Predeceſſors. Pray my Friends, remember the Sentence of Truth, *If any Man love this World, the love of the Father is not in him*; *and the Friendſhips of this World are Enmity with God*; and this we apparently find, when young People begin to diſlike the Patterns left them by their Fore-Fathers, and eſteem them Singularities, they too often run into a Contempt of Truth it ſelf, ſuch are not Aſſidious, nor Diligent at Religious Meetings, and theſe grow leſs Concerned for Private Devotions, and a mental Waiting on God; but are Carried away by the Humours, Tempers, and Intereſts of their Aſſociates, ſo that they become very indifferent and lukewarm as to Religion, and thereby fail of the Grace of God, and of thoſe ſweet Enjoyments which he beſtows on his little ones; and tho' ſuch may hear how theſe are born up by a Divine Hand, and comforted in all their Tribulations, and grow thereby Stronger and Stronger; yet for want of a true application of the Spirit, they let thoſe very expreſſions in at one Ear,

Ear, and out at the other, as is uſually ſaid, and never attain to, or partake of the ſweetneſs of God's Love and Mercy, which would give them Victory over this World, and make them more than Conquerors, though Chriſt who hath loved us.

Dear Friends, Watch againſt an over-free Familiarity, and look unto your Heavenly Head and Example, whoſe Converſation amongſt Men was Weighty, he Mourned frequently, Rejoyced very ſeldom; the World hide their Faces from him, and eſteemed him not; but to us who believe, he is precious, he is the Heavenly Mediator, by and through whom, the whole Flock and Family of God are Nouriſhed and kept alive.

But I cannot here omit the conſideration of ſome young Perſons, whom I have known and mourned over, who have had the benefit of a good Education, a good Natural Temper, and an enjoyment of the Goods of this World; yet ſcarcely were they come to Years of Underſtanding, but they are ready, like ſome of Old, to ſay unto God, *depart from us, we deſire not the knowledge of thy Ways*: The Temptations of Society have prevailed on them, and Wine and Strong Drink,

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and it's to be fear'd, Laſciviouſneſs and Effeminacy have gotten maſtery over them, until they became a Reproach to all Religion. Oh! What Lamentation ſhall I take up for them? My Spirit hath been grieved for thoſe things, and the Principle whereby they have been betrayed, hath been the Love of the World; ſome in ſeeking to obtain the Riches, and ſome through Love to the Ways, Cuſtoms and Luſts thereof: I earneſtly deſire, that the great God may, if it be conſiſtent with his Will, Viſit them a-freſh, and manifeſt his Judgments to ſuch, as Flames of Fire, 'till they cry out, *Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do to be Saved:* However I hope, that the Out-goings of thoſe, will be a cauſe of Conſideration to others who yet meet with ſome Reſtraints and Checks, when they are about to run into the ſame exceſs of Riot, and that it may engage them to hearken to the Voice behind them, ſaying, *This is the Way, walk in it*; when they turn to the right hand or to the left, and that the Preſence of the Lord may ſtill lift up their Eyes to that Rock from whence their Help cometh: He hath never ſaid to the Seed of *Jacob, Seek my Face in Vain*; and as you

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are kept watching againſt theſe and all other Temptations, he will Adminiſter to you Life and Vertue, and Bleſs your Meetings for his Worſhip, and your Private and Spiritual Retirements with the bleſſed Dew of his Love, yea, he will ſend you a plentiful Rain, whereby he will refreſh his Heritage whenever they are Weary. And although ſome may be as the deaf Adder, who will not hear the Voice of the Charmer; yet I hope theſe, and the many repeated Advices, may have an Influence upon you through the Grace of God, that though Sinners Entice, you will not Conſent, nor be Conformable to this World, but be renewed in the Spirit of your Minds, that as he who hath called you is Holy, ſo may you alſo be, in all manner of Converſation.

Thirdly, Let your Spirits be earneſtly in Love with the Lord, who is always preſent with you, and is the great benefactor to the Children of Men.

He that cometh unto God, muſt believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of all thoſe that diligently ſeek him: One might think that a People who believe this, have need of little exhortation to Love him; and I know ſome amongſt you are in ſincerity

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ready to ſay, Certainly he is altogether Lovely. But alas, the many Snares and ſubtil Temptations of him who is called the Devil, and Satan, have prevailed on others, that they ſay in their Hearts, there is no Beauty nor Comlineſs in Jeſus, nor any thing in him deſirable to ſeek after: Theſe are neither ſenſible of God's Adorable Preſence, nor of his Divine Bounty; and although they hear of him by their Ears, yet do not their Eyes behold him; therefore they Worſhip other God's, and eſteem the Creatures more than the Creator, who is God over all bleſſed for Ever. And ſuch become Guilty of the great Sin of Idolatry in this Age, as they of Old were, who Worſhipped Stocks and Stones, and bowed down to the works of their own hands: The beloved Diſciple Cautioned the Believers in his Day, ſaying, *Little Children keep your ſelves from Idols*: This Caution continues needful, and will hold in all Ages; our Lord, when he made a ſummary repetition of the Law, ſaid, the firſt and chief Command, is to Love the Lord with all your Hearts, Minds, Souls and Spirits; whoever doth this, will find his Love and Affections abſtracted from other Objects,

jects, any otherwiſe than as it concurs with God's Will; and theſe dare not fall down and Worſhip the Creature, nor ſuffer the Love of other Objects to draw them from him, and thereby bring on them the Guilt of the great Sin of *Idolatry*.

And this Love of God will engage you to paſs the time of your Sojourning here, in Watchfulneſs, that you may not offend him. Great care is generally taken to pleaſe thoſe we Love? If there ſhould be Labour in it, the Labour it ſelf becomes a Delight. And this Love is a firm Bond and Engagement unto the Upright hearted to Seek the Lord, and to Wait upon, and to Worſhip him, who renews their Strength through the viſitations of his Spirit and Preſence; this engages them not only to attend duly Religious Meetings, but to an internal Devotion, and to a ſeeking him in Private; yea, to the exerciſe the Apoſtle ſpoke of, when he ſaid, *Pray without ceaſing*. Theſe cannot eaſily forſake the Aſſembling themſelves, whatever the manner of ſome may be. But as the Day of God's Glorious Manifeſtation, and the Hour of Death and of Judgment approaches, ſo the Lord prepares them for it, by his Judgments in their Souls; and this makes

them value them, as *David* ſaid, *Pſ.* 19. *Thy Judgments, O Lord! are True and Righteous altogether, more to be deſired than Gold, and ſweeter than the Honey; for by them is thy Servant Warned.* And the Lord becomes their Teacher, and makes known his Way unto them, they walk in them, and bleſs his Name; and he fits them with Spiritual Armour on the right and left Hand, that the Evil one may not touch them: And theſe compoſe the Armies in Heaven, that follow the Lamb, and they will ſurely obtain the Victory, and will return Praiſe and Thankſgiving to God, who is worthy for Ever.

But, my Friends, this Condition is not to be obtained in Man's Will, nor in his Time, and it's only thoſe who Love God, who can attain theſe bleſſed Enjoyments; they are not ſuch, whom every ſlight occaſion will turn from their Duty, or make forgetful of their Religious Retirements, for *theſe* Meetings are not too Hot in the Summer, nor too Cold in the Winter: I do not write this as a Reflection on the neceſſary care of Aged and Infirm Bodies; for I know if ſuch daily wait on him, whether at Home or Abroad, the Lord will viſit them in their

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weak Condition, and when the Outward Man decays, he will renew the Inward; But it is to ſuch as out of Niceneſs, or Lukewarmneſs, grow Indifferent in their Duty. This is a Principle contrary to the Love of God, and too many are carry'd away with it, who become neither Hot nor Cold, till they are ſpued out of his Mouth.

But I expect better things of ſome of you, even ſuch things as accompany Salvation, though we are made thus to Caution all; and believe it my Friends, God Loves thoſe who Love him, he Watcheth over thoſe who are Watchful towards him, he Honoureth thoſe who Honour him; Nay, in all their Affliction he is Afflicted, and none knows better all their Trials and Exerciſes than he doth, nor is any one ſo able to help you, or to make your Life happy at laſt; he delights to viſit thoſe who viſit him, and will come down on ſuch, as Showers on the mown Graſs, or as Rain to water the Earth. Oh! the great benefits this true Love of God brings with it, they are undeclarable, and are indeed from that River, the *Streams of which make glad the Heritage of God.*

Let us never be ſo Unhappy, as to have our Hearts withdrawn from him. Let not the Cares of this Life, nor the Deceit of this World Choak us. Let not the Love to the Creatures bereave us of this Divine Love: But Labour daily more and more, that your Hearts may be filled with Charity, which is the bond of Fellowſhip amongſt thoſe who Love the Lord. You may meet with many Temptations; but as your Hearts are fixed on him, he *will be a place of Defence to you within the munition of Rocks; and your Teacher will not be removed into a Corner*; and ſhould you turn a little to the right, or to the left, you will hear the Word behind you. The conſideration of God's Preſence, has been a preſervative to many a poor Travelling Soul, while they looked at him as being near them, even in them. Of whom ſhall they Fear, or be any way Diſmayed beſides?— Temptations to Evil cannot Live, nor have Power to enter that Spirit in whom theſe conſiderations actually abide: Theſe will delight to Dwell with him, and receive Bread of Life from him: Theſe can ſay, *The Tabernacle of God is with Men, and he will Dwell in them, and Walk in them.* And as God

God bleſſeth them with the renewed Senſe of his Love, ſo their Love returns unto him in Thankſgivings and Praiſes from Day to Day, and ſuch are able to Anſwer the Apoſtle thus, *there are Conſolations in Chriſt Jeſus, Comforts in Love*: And theſe have the Fellowſhip of the Spirit, and with *David* are glad when 'tis ſaid unto them, *Let us go in to the Houſe of the Lord.*

In fine, my Friends, The Love of God, and of his Truth, is the Beginning, the Middle and the End of Religion, it is Duty, and will be Reward: Whereas the Love of this World, is that deſtructive Principle which engages People in all Wickedneſs, whereby they grow hateful to, and Hating one another, and ſuch paſs away their Days in Pride, in Covetouſneſs, and in Uncleanneſs, and drag along a heavy Chain, 'till their Lives Conſume in a forgetfulneſs of God: Then mark their End, *The Wicked ſhall be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that Forget God: Therefore, as Children of God, flee thoſe things, and follow after Holineſs, and with ſuch as call upon God, of a pure Mind.*

That this word of Exhortation may be written on your Souls by the Holy

Spirit, is my Prayer and Supplication to God for you.

Fourthly, Friends, This will engage you in Solemn Prayer, and in a due Commemoration of your Latter End.

Our Condition of Life here, is a ſtate of Dependance, and we receive the many Mercies which we enjoy from God's hand; the Breath of our Noſtrils, the Light of the Sun, he giveth Rain from Heaven, and Fruitful Seaſons: Time might fail to enumerate his Mercies which are more than the Hairs of our Heads, and engaged a Holy Man to ſay, *Pſal.* 8. *When I conſider the Heavens, the work of thy Fingers, the Moon and the Stars that thou haſt made: What is Man that thou art mindful of him?* Theſe are the Effects of his undeclarable Compaſſion: But the greateſt of all is, the ſending his Son who Died for us, that he might Redeem us from all Inquity; and the placing his Holy Spirit in us, that we might thereby be Sanctified.—Some grow unmindful of theſe Favours; but they are not God's People: For theſe call upon his Holy Name, theſe know he gives his Bleſſed Spirit to ſuch as ask for it, thoſe that ask receive. But ſome, while they have

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Riches and Honour, and Reputation in this World, do not mind him, nor ſeek after him; but burn Incence to their own Drag, and Sacrifice to their own Net; and ſuch are far from Praying to God, whatever little Forms they may have, nor do theſe return Thanksgiving to him; but rather ſay unto God, *Depart from us, we deſire not the Knowledge of thy Ways.* They ſpend their Time in falſe Pleaſure, and ſo go down to the Grave.

But the true ſeed of *Jacob* are ſuch, as, being ſenſible of their needs, become *Poor in Spirit*, and *Hunger and Thirſt after Righteouſneſs.* The Life of theſe is a Life of Prayer, and their Prayer is the Prayer of Faith, and the Lord hears them and regards their Cries. Thus ſaith the high and the lofty one, who Inhabiteth Eternity: *I dwell in the High and in the Holy Place: With them alſo that are Poor, and of Contrite Spirits, to revive the Spirits of the Humble, and the Hearts of the Contrite ones.* Here is a bleſſed Encouragement from the Mouth of the Great God, to call upon him, to pour forth our Supplications to him, and to lay our Wants and Weakneſſes before him; and tho' it may ſo happen, that we may not have the expected re-

turn ſpeedily, yet we muſt ask again, and again. The Apoſtle *Paul* under a Temptation, Cryed three times to the Lord; yet we read not that the Temptation was at firſt removed: But Grace ſufficient was given him to reſiſt it. Therefore in ſuch a caſe deſpond not, let your Prayers be for Spiritual Bleſſings, and with Upright Hearts, and he that made you, will aſuredly hear you: Be not too particular in Inſtances relating to your Bodies, or Eſtate, or this preſent Life, let the Almighty work there as he pleaſeth, and never doubt his returns to the Prayer of Faith, and of true Reſignation.

But it may ſo happen, that ſome poor Soul may ſay as *Sion* of Old, *The Lord hath forgotten me, my God hath forſaken me.* Yet you ſee how near ſhe was to the Lord, and how nigh he was to her; *Thou art graven*, ſaid he, *on the Palms of my Hands, thy Walls are continually before me.* I knew one who in ſuch an Eſtate, wondring why the Holy one dealt ſo by his beſt beloved Children, had for Anſwer, That it was not that he delighted to Afflict or Grieve: But two eſpecial benefits ariſe herefrom, the one is an excellent conſervator of Humility, and

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keeps them from an Exalted Mind, which has been Ruinous to ſome who have Taſted of the Fruits of the good Land: The other bleſſed Effect is, it hath prepared their Souls for a greater reliſh of the Lord's Bounty, when he has pleaſed to break forth as a Morning without Clouds; and their Faith being thus in God, and Hope and Love alſo, they have afterwards receiv'd a Living Crown, to the true Joy of their Poor Souls.

I therefore Counſel you, be not diſcouraged when you can feel little or nothing of Comfort in your Approaching to the Lord: Nay, though you are apt to think it's your own Vanity, Sin and Unthankfulneſs, may occaſion the withdrawing the Light of God's Countenance: But be reſolute as *Job* was, *Tho' he Slay me, yet will I truſt in him*; and you know what God did to him in the End. Moreover, it was the Experience of the Ancient Prophets, as ſaid *Iſaiah*, *Thou art a God that hideſt thy ſelf from the Houſe of Jacob; and I will wait upon thee though thou hide thy ſelf.* This was the Practice of the Holy Men of Old, and it is well if we do like them.

Our

Our Bleſſed Lord, who knew beſt our Condition, puts forth a Parable, how Men ought always to Pray, and not to Faint, when he ſpeaks of the Unjuſt Judge, and of the Poor Widow; he heard her Petition, to rid himſelf of her frequent Importunity: Saying, And ſhall not God hear his Elect, who Cry to him Day and Night? But this Cry muſt not be a Lip-Labour only, nor a vain Repetition of Words; but it's a Supplication of the Soul, and an Internal and Intenſe Exerciſe of Spirit; it's as the Apoſtle ſaid, a Praying without ceaſing, that will procure you the Divine Bleſſing, and the Light of God's Countenance, that makes your Hearts more glad, than thoſe who have had great Increaſe of Corn and Wine, *Pſal.* 4.

Well therefore may I recommend this Practice to you, it being our Lord's promiſe, *Ask and you ſhall Receive, Seek and you ſhall Find, Knock and it ſhall be Opened to you.* Beſides, you may find in your own Experiences, that the letting out your Minds after any Created Object, and eſpecially a multitude of Cares, leſſen your attention in Prayer, make you ſlack in that Exerciſe, and careleſs whether you enjoy the Bleſſing; whereas

Mary of Old Sang truly, *God filleth the Hungry with good things, and ſends the Rich and the Full Empty away.*

That which will contribute and add force to your Prayer, is a due conſideration of your Latter End: This is what People are generally very Careleſs about, and is become a Proverb, *I thought of it no more than I did of my Dying Day.* Poor Creature, the more thou art to be Pitied, who doſt not conſider that which will unavoidably come upon thee; it's no marvel that thou proſecuteſt the World with ſuch Earneſtneſs, that thou followeſt divers Luſts and Paſſions with ſuch a bent of Spirit, that Pride and Covetouſneſs have ſo great a place within thee, thou art heaping up ſtore for a long Seaſon, and ſeeſt not that thou may'ſt leave it all to morrow: Our Lord, when he gave that precious Caution (take heed and beware of Coveteouſneſs) ſays, *The Grounds of a certain Rich Man brought forth Plentifully; ſo that he was about to pull down and Build up,* &c. And in the midſt of this Career, the Meſſenger of Death came to him, ſaying, *This Night is thy Soul required of thee.* What think you? Had it not been better he had been

been preparing for that unavoidable Sentance? Had he not better have been laying up Treasure in Heaven?

The mistake that has attended People in this Case, hath been an Imagination, that the meditation of Death would Imbitter their Lives, and make them Pensive and Sad; And so indeed it will, while they retain Iniquity in their Hearts, and reject the Love of God. But I am perswaded, it's possible we may so think of Death, as it may not appear Dreadful; but a transition to an Estate far more happy and lasting, than all the perishing Delights of this Fading World. Had it not been so, *Moses* would never have prayed, *Oh that the People were Wise, that they would consider their Latter End.* I have Heard, or Read, that when *Bees* are engaged in a Quarrel and Fight, as it were a pitch'd Battle, some handfuls of Dust being thrown among them, soon Quiets them. I cannot tell whether the relation be true: But this I know, that the actual Consideration how in a little time we must return to Dust, will engage Mankind to break off their Quarrels and Contentions, their Debauches and Coveteous Practises, and bring them to

Fear

Fear the Great God, before whom they muſt appear Naked, and Uncloathed; and where ſuch things prevail, it's apt ſo to do: Whereas, as ſaid the Prophet, *Thoſe that put far away the Evil Day, they cauſe the Seat of Violence to draw near, and they become unacquainted with the Afflictions of Joſeph.* Theſe forget Prayer, forget their dependance on God, and they truſt in their own Arm. But, my Friends, let it be your daily Concern to ſeek him whilſt he may be found, and call upon him while he is near: Let the Wicked forſake his Way, and the Ungodly Man his Thoughts; then will the Lord blot out your Iniquity, and remember your Tranſgreſſions no more.—— But he will fill your Hearts with his Grace, and give his Light and Peace to your Habitations, that you may Sing Anthems of Praiſe to God; and with the Holy Angels, at the Birth of Chriſt, ſay, *Glory to God on High, on Earth Peace, and Good-will amongſt Men.* And thus you may be made witneſſes of his divine Sweetneſs in your Meetings, as you gather in the one Spirit, ſenſible of your own Poverty, and Live in Humility, and in the Fear of the Great God, continuing inſtant in

Prayer,

Prayer, your Hearts will be greatly affected with God's Love, Watching againſt the many devices of Satan, that you may not be entangled with the Affairs of the World, nor be prevailed on by *the Luſts of the Eye, of the Fleſh, and Pride of Life:* And then be Watchful, that the Enemy may not do that by an Inſtrument, which he could not do without; particularly againſt a too free and unneceſſary familiarity with thoſe who Love the World more than our Lord Jeſus Chriſt. But *Look to the Rock from whence you were Hewn, and the hole of the Pit whence you were Digged.* Then ſhall you be preſerved as the *Iſrael* of God, and become his choſen Generation, and peculiar People; *and ſhew forth the Praiſes of him who hath called you out of Darkneſs, into his marvelous Light.* And ſuch as Labour amongſt you in the Service of Truth, will be refreſhed with you, and we ſhall Magnifie his Holy Name together, who is Worthy for Ever.

My Friends, I am further to adviſe you, that you beware that no Diſcord may ariſe betwixt you; for this way the Enemy frequently works to Divide you, and to Scatter you from the Truth, and one from another: But where any thing tends that way, let it be ſpeedily ended, let not the Sun go down upon your Anger, for you will find it of a very pernicious Conſequence: This happens ſometimes by Perſons having an Eye to their Temporal Intereſt, more than to the Peace of Sion; otherwhiles, when ſome, like *Diotrephes*, ſeek to have

have the Preheminence. I have obſerved Pride and Covetouſneſs are the greateſt make-baits in the World; and were our Hearts purged from theſe Abominable Vices, How ſweetly might we Live one with another? How would the Fellowſhip of Truth, and Communion of God's Love abound amongſt us? We ſhould be one anothers Joy, and Crown of Rejoycing in the Lord: Whereas Animoſities and Heart-burnings, deſtroy our Internal Peace, lead into Parties and Factions, and at laſt become the Confuſion and Ruin of Societies. Then comes the Diſputer, the wiſe of this World; and here People of Controvertial Diſpoſitions have a Life, which is hurtful to the Life of Truth.

Where is the Wiſe, where is the Diſputer of this World; ſaid the Apoſtle, *Has not God made Foolishneſs to become the great Wiſdom.* And when our Lord obſerved this Spirit of Preheminence creeping in amongſt the Diſciples, Did not he ſet up a little Child? and ſaid, *He that will enter the Kingdom, muſt become as a little Child.* Pray Friends, let this Lamb-like Spirit Rule in you; let this Babe of the Birth Immortal Govern you, he will lead you in the ways of Peace, and give you true Peace in the Latter End; not a Peace of your own forming, which will certainly be broken: But as the Holy Birth is brought forth, you will join in conſert with thoſe Angels and bleſſed Spirits, Singing, *Glory to God on High, on Earth Peace, and Good-Will amongſt Men.* But

But as you duly obſerve the foregoing Advices, let not your Minds be overcome with any inordinate Affections after the things of this World; but duly conſider the great God as preſent with you, continuing in Prayer to him, and in thinking of your Latter End. This I am perſwaded, will Preſerve you from the Temptations, Tranſports of Anger and Clamour, and is the moſt Sovereign Remedy to keep your Spirits Humble and Low, out of the way of Ambition and Vain-Glory, and Covetouſneſs; and *as a People riſen with Chriſt, you will ſeek thoſe things that are Above, where Chriſt ſits at the right hand of God*, and will Mortifie all your Carnal Affections, and put off all Wrath, and occaſion of Diſputes and Quarrels, and *as new-Born Babes, deſire the ſincere Milk of God's Word, that you may grow thereby.* And as your Hearts are kept in the Love of God, it will melt down all high aſpiring Thoughts, and then you will Live as Brethren; be Pitiful, be Courteous, be of one Mind, that the God of Peace may be with you; then will he Inſtruct you in his Way, and will make you Elders and Overſeers, among his Flock and Family, who are to give them their Food in due Seaſon; and the Watering Showers of his Love will deſcend from Day to Day, he will Prepare and Fit you by his Spirit, and at laſt bring you into his Heavenly and Everlaſting Kingdom, where *all Tears ſhall be wiped from your Eyes, and Sorrow and Sighing ſhall be no more.*

FINIS.

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